**PORT MEETING MINUTES: 4/25/2011**

**In attendance: Susan, Marelda, Lisa, Elysa, Jeff, Jonathan, Sarah, Barbara, Mary Anne and Mary K.**

Susan started the meeting by taking time to debrief from the Nina Simon workshop last week. New ideas, areas of concern and general reflections were stated.

* **Sarah:** Enjoyed the clarification of the participatory models (contributory, collaborative, co-creative, and hosted) specifically the structure or scaffolding that was required in each.
* **Jonathan:** Stated that in moving forward it will be beneficial to define structure in each program so that visitors understand our expectations or instructions. Without structure visitors will have little direction.
* **Lisa:** Enjoyed the examples of the hosting model as it exemplified that no one person or organization is the smartest or the best. It represented shared authority and collaboration that we hope to have in each port. Moving forward we need to consider how much we can realistically do- a contributory or hosted model may be beneficial in terms of production value and less overwhelming.
* **Sarah:** Moving forward we need to be able to define our partners as well as the amount of involvement they will have at each port. Building on Lisa’s comment, we need to decide where on the scale of participation each port will fall.
* **Jonathan:** Enjoyed the idea of creating programs or exhibits where visitors can connect with other visitors- an example being the advice booth that Nina showed us.
* **Marelda:** Felt that Nina’s clarification of the different participatory models and other topics gave her courage. Nina was sensible and reasonable in considering what we were capable of and was therefore able to help us to feel comfortable when coming up with ideas.
* **Lisa:** In moving forward we should continue to think of ways to tie the pre-during-post experiences together –making sure to remember the string of pearls example.
* **Erin:** Enjoyed that Nina encouraged us to think of a crazy idea for programs and exhibits. With examples like the Human Library Project it was clear that crazy ideas have great potential if they are thought out and done well.
  + **Sarah:** Began to think about the ways we can use ideas like the Human Library Project at Mystic Seaport.
* **Susan:** Stated that in talking with Nina she learned that really popular ideas often get lost because people forget to put effort into them. With ideas like the Flash Mob or getting shanghaied we have to remember to work at them so that they are highly organized and well executed- if we do, they have the potential to catch people’s attention.
  + **Lisa:** Agreed- explaining that even though it may seem as though the event is only reaching the 100+ people that are at the physical site, the after effect on YouTube could reach hundreds more.
* **Elysa:** Explained how successful a flash mob could be if we connected a particular event to it- an example being a parade of reenactors who marched through her town on a Tuesday that caught people’s attention.
* **Elysa:** Liked the idea of creating matrices as they can assist in mapping ideas, balancing models of participation or types of programs, and making sure we do not neglect any audiences.
* **Lisa:** In moving forward we need to decide how many people or how wide we want to reach.
  + **Elysa:** Should the focus be national? For example we need to consider whether people in Montana have to care about the Morgan for other activities to be successful.
  + **Jonathan:** The allocation of resources may influence the National story. The possibility for return of investment may also be a factor.
* **Mary K:** Liked the way Nina did not place judgment on the level of participation each museum incorporates in their exhibits and programming- instead it seemed as though any level was fine. Nina also had great timing for every small group activity- the workshop moved along smoothly and everyone could contribute.
* **Susan:** Received an email from Nina where she stated that she was inspired after she left and was impressed by our positivity- we never started criticizing others ideas.
* **Jeff:** Was impressed by Nina’s organization and ability to scaffold our activities so that we thought things through deeply. At the end of each day we left thinking about the materials (structural, mental, physical) needed to make each program happen.
* **Susan:** Liked that Nina was efficient, focused and did not exhaust each idea or unpack things too far. These are characteristics we should take on in the future.
* **Jonathan:** Enjoyed Nina’s decisiveness. She was able to confidently make clear judgments or decisions without offending others so that the day’s events continued to run smoothly.
* **Elysa:** As we traveled into each gallery for Nina’s activity it became clear how cramped the Morgan will be if there are large numbers of people aboard the ship. Moving forward we need to make sure everyone is seen, heard, comfortable, etc.
* **Barbara:** It would be helpful to see pictures of the ports or to have more information on the realities of the different places- dock dimensions, amenities, etc.
  + **Susan: Will invite Shannon McKenzie to the next port meeting to report her findings and research on each port.**
* **Barbara:** Need to start thinking about what defines success or what will be deemed a success?
  + **Susan:** The NEH themes will help us define success- they should be added to the Master List chart. The matrices will also be beneficial in terms of deciding which ideas stay and go- this will be the hardest job.
* **Susan:** Asked the question: does everything need to go on the web? It seemed like many of the ideas raised related back to an online component- is that beneficial?
  + **Lisa:** Felt the web can enhance other programs and will be one way to make connections between the pre-during-post visits. Also things like Facebook and Twitter can show a shift toward shared power and authority if the posts come from various staff members.
  + **Mary K:** Suggested that Mort (representing the Dead Horse Ceremony on Whaling Ships) become a Twitter page much like the missing Cobra at the Bronx Zoo.

Erin summarized Nina’s reflections and recommendations:

* It is an overwhelming task and we therefore need to **create a clear structure to make decisions and move through the schedule confidently.**
* We need to work with Marketing, Merchandizing and the General Public as they can be great promoters only if we let them we therefore **need a more flexible approach to brand control.**
* Our degree of community participation must be realistic as this task is very complex therefore Nina suggests that **70% of the projects we plan should be non-participatory (“we make it, you experience it”) and 30% contributory or hosted.**
* **Co-creative and collaborative projects can be too time consuming** therefore we need to use models that take less effort on our end and can accommodate the largest number of participants. We need to find manageable ways to slot people’s enthusiasm into projects and participation that are easy to control- **consult Wing Luke and Oakland Museum for ideas on how to do this.**
* We **need a basic filtering question- “What is the top thing we want to learn through this project to change how we approach all our projects here at Mystic Seaport”.** We can’t think that a more participatory institution happens automatically or is obvious- we have to consciously plan it.

After reading Nina’s reflections several people had comments:

* **Barbara:**  We need to remember that we can’t control every little thing
* **Jonathan:** We need to find a positive way of reacting to things
* **Marelda:** We need some control over media and have a plan intact for certain events- it might be helpful to get Dan McFadden involved.
* **Elysa:** Models of participation and involvement differ based on whether it is a visitor or a partner organization. We need to create two different matrices to determine level of involvement. Perhaps the only two locations that we have collaborative and co-creative relationships with are New London and New Bedford.

Susan passed around the chart of programs that was created based on the ideas from Nina’s workshop. **Before next meeting Erin will email that chart to everyone in this group and also post it on the wikispace. For next meeting start to think about edits/additions/merges and also what programs this port group will work on specifically.**

**FOR NEXT MEETING on MAY 9, 2011 Homework Teams:**

**#1 Visitor Experience Matrix (define the criteria for decision making and goal setting)** EE, JS, JC, EM

**#2 Port Partner Matrix (define the criteria for decision making and goal setting)** MK, MH, JD, KK

**#3 Port Quantification (define the available resources of the ports--#days in port, visitor capacity, hours available for parties, etc)** SF, LK, SC, BJ

These three matrices will be used in conjunction with each other to help define success and determine which of the many compelling projects will be pursued.